

unique in the history of China, were revealed at a press conference in Geneva, Switzerland, near the international headquarters of WWF. Representing China was Mr Li Chaobo, Director of the Environment Protection Office of the State Council, which is responsible for environment and conservation matters. Speaking for the WWF was Sir Peter Scott, Chairman of WWF Inter-

national, who stressed the urgency of the threat to the Giant Panda's food-source and the pressing need to increase this unique 'bear's' population both in the wild and in captivity.

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Environmental Monographs and Symposia

Rather many years ago, when planning and founding our old series of 'Plant Science Monographs' and 'World Crops Books', which lasted for some twenty-five years and even more volumes, we came to feel that one of the most worth-while things that could possibly be done would be to encourage leading specialists throughout the world to write up their subjects, and then help them to publish their often unique knowledge in the form of dignified monographic or other volumes. Through careful planning and appropriate execution, these volumes commonly established their Authors as leaders in their fields, which both the volumes and their Authors thus helped actively to consolidate. Several of these books ran into subsequent and/or other-language editions, and none I think proved unworthy of the effort and expenditure involved in its preparation and launching.

With knowledge now becoming ever-more-extensive and concomitantly fragmented at least so far as individual leaders are concerned, the tendency is more-and-more towards 'contributed' volumes that cover specific scientific or other fields—whether these result from actual 'live' symposia or from the guided persuasion, by suitably dedicated and patient Editors, of their colleagues to write up their own specialist parts of a composite subject in conformity to an agreed overall plan. Often we have a mix of these two extremes, basing a symposium volume originally on a propitious 'live' symposium (or conference, congress, seminar, colloquium, workshop, or whatever) but then 'filling in' with later contributions—particularly to replace unsatisfactory attempts or to close gaps in coverage. Monographs are accepted as treatments of single topics or groups of allied topics by not more than three specialist Authors.

Having thus, through the years, consolidated our views concerning the usefulness and indeed importance of the aforementioned catalysis of specialist scientific or allied writing and dignified publication, we were pleased to accept last year an invitation from John Wiley & Sons (who many of us consider to be the best international publishers of books in the general field of Man's and Nature's environment) to convene for them and generally supervise an open-ended series of

substantial volumes which, after due deliberation and discussion, came out with the above title which we feel and hope needs no further explanation. The project is sponsored by the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, which is tax-exempt and empowered to collect funds for its promotion and furtherance.

There seems virtually no limit to possibilities and indeed desirabilities for this new series—we have listed several dozen possible ideas for it already—and, as colleagues in the Wiley family of series, we already have the SCOPE volumes emanating from what in a sense is the world's environmental 'summit', and hope soon to be joined by another, largely complementary series.

We expect to be getting under way with publication next year (1981) of the first few volumes in our series of Environmental Monographs and Symposia, for which some contracts have already been signed. Early themes (if not necessarily final titles etc.) are due to include 'Stress Effects on Natural Ecosystems' (Ed. G. W. Barrett & R. Rosenberg), 'Modernization of Agriculture in Developing Countries' (by I. Arnon), 'Ecosystem Theory and Application' (Ed. G. A. Knox, President of INTECOL), 'Air Pollution and Plant Life' (Ed. M. Treshow), and 'Environmental Education' (Ed. D. Hughes-Evans & J. L. Aldrich). The first two are already in press.

With the availability now of a printed *Authors' and Editors' Guide for Preparation of Typescript and Illustrations* for this propitious new series, such preparation and subsequent editing will be greatly facilitated and production surely speeded. So although experience has shown that it never does to promise publication of any particular volume so far ahead of time, it is confidently to be expected that the above and many others will materialize in due course.

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Solar-powered Airplane Flies

Although it attained a maximum height of only about three metres and a speed of 26.6 kph, a plastic aircraft weighing 30 kg, powered entirely by solar-generated electricity collected in photoelectric cells carried on its wings, recently flew 3 km in California with a pilot weighing 43 kg (according to the *Journal de Genève* of 9–10 August 1980—cf. *International Herald Tribune* of same date).

This was reputedly a first such flight and, even though a cloud would presumably suffice to stop the motor until suitable storage of energy can be effected, will doubtless be followed by other, more impressive ones that conceivably might herald an era of totally non-polluting, fuel-saving guided flight. Already the creator of this 'Gossamer Penguin' is reported to be preparing a 'Solar Challenger' that may be expected to make flights of 150 km.